BOOM! STUDIOS

20!

JAMES TYNION IV

WERTHER DELL'EDERA

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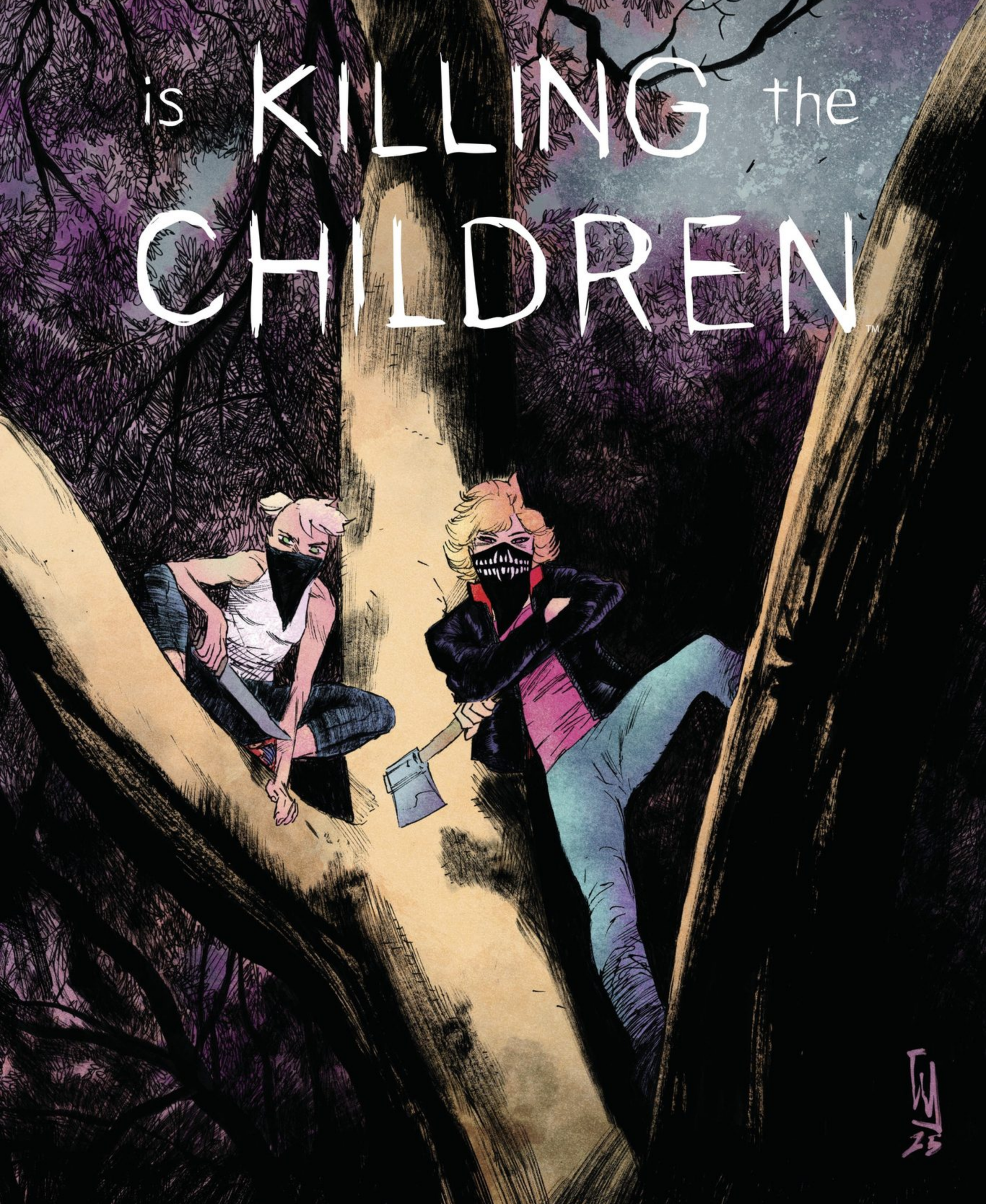
Nº 43

# SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN™



HEY THERE, COWBOY.

HUH?

IT'S NOTHING. JUST A THING I SAY.

I THOUGHT I WALKED OUT OF THE HOUSE WITH MY ***STETSON*** AGAIN WITHOUT REALIZING.

I JUST SENSED IT IN YOUR ***RUGGED OUTDOORSMAN SPIRIT.***

WHAT CAN I GET YOU?

BOURBON, NEAT. A STEP OVER RAIL, BUT NOT TOO FANCY.

HEY.

ERICA, YOU FOUND ME. MEET MY NEW FRIEND.

I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, BUT HE'S A *COWBOY.*

I'M *BERNARD.*

SLAP

BERNIE THE COWBOY BARTENDER.

DIDN'T YOU WANT TO WALK AROUND?

I'M GOING TO GET THE ***DOWN LOW*** ABOUT WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AROUND HERE, STRAIGHT FROM THE ***HORSE'S MOUTH.***

NOW I'M A HORSE.

I'M GOING TO WALK AROUND.

DON'T GO INTO THE WOODS. WE'LL GO TOGETHER, TOMORROW. ONCE WE HAVE A HANDLE ON EVERYTHING.

YEAH.

ZIP

BLIP

HI.

WHAT'S WRONG?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU *CALLED* ME. YOU HAVE *NEVER* CALLED ME BEFORE.

THAT'S NOT TRUE.

OKAY, YOU'VE CALLED WHEN SOMETHING IS WRONG. LIKE **CATASTROPHICALLY, TERRIBLY** WRONG.

NOTHING IS CATASTROPHICALLY, TERRIBLY WRONG.

BUT IT'S WEIRD. THERE'S SOMETHING ***BIG*** HERE. JESSICA ISN'T...IT'S LIKE SHE DOESN'T WANT TO LOOK AT SOMETHING IN THE FACE.

YEAH. ***CECILIA*** IS BEING REALLY WEIRD, TOO.

I NEED YOU TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE. WHAT HAPPENED ***LAST TIME.*** JESSICA ISN'T GOING TO TELL US, BUT I THINK I NEED TO KNOW.

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO THAT?

I DON'T KNOW, AARON. FIGURE IT OUT.

I SUPPOSE I COULD GO THROUGH THE OLD REPORTS...

I HAVE TO GO.

HI.

I THINK THEY'RE ALL DEAD.

ARE YOU HURT?

NO.

OKAY.

I COULDN'T STOP THEM.

I KNOW. IT'S OKAY. YOU'RE SAFE NOW.

BUT...

THEY'RE GOING TO ASK YOU WHAT YOU *SAW*, AND YOU HAVE TO SAY YOU *DON'T KNOW* WHAT YOU SAW.

THAT MAYBE IT WAS A *BEAR*, BUT IT WAS TOO FAST AND YOU DON'T KNOW.

IF YOU SAY THERE WAS A *MONSTER*, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE YOU.

WHO *ARE* YOU?

THIS NEXT BIT IS GOING TO BE HARD AND WEIRD AND NOBODY IS GOING TO BELIEVE YOU, BUT YOU CAN *TRUST ME*, OKAY?

I'M *ERICA*.

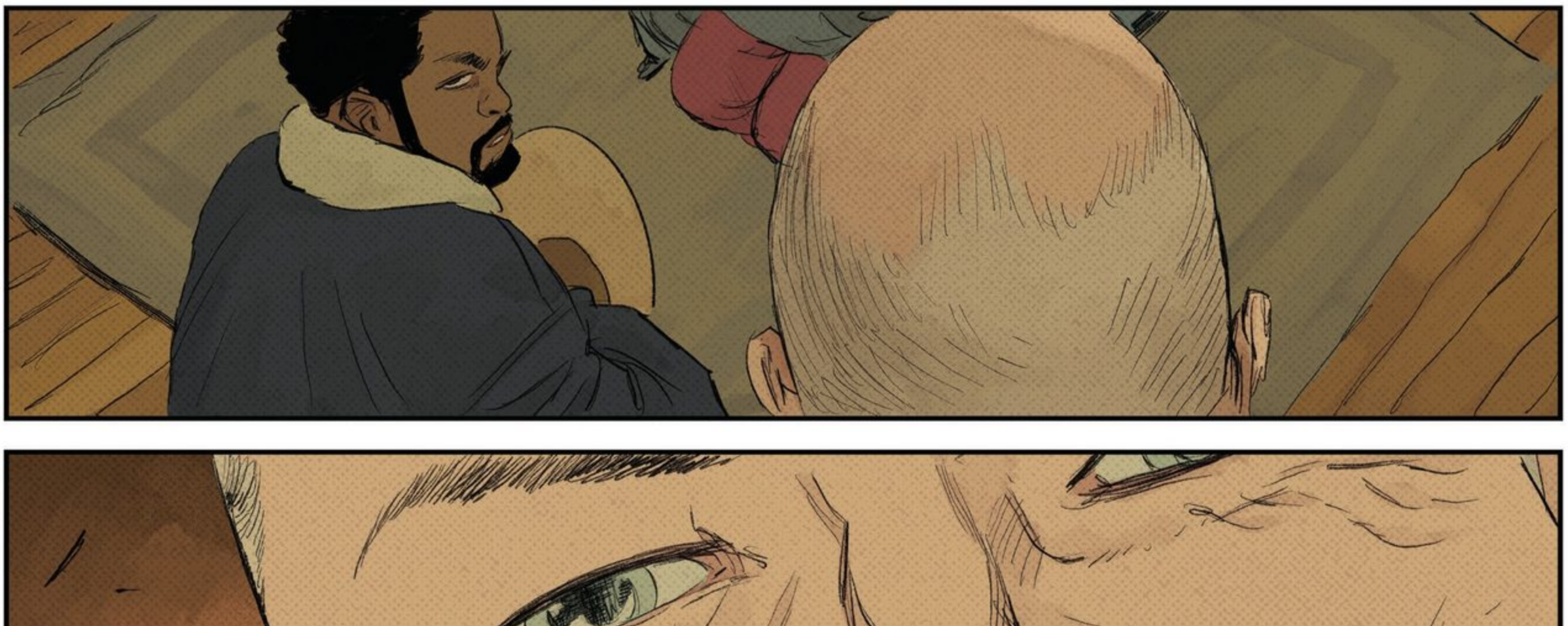
HEY, MUSTACHE!

WHAT?!

GIRL COVERED IN BLOOD!

SHE NEEDS HELP!

# SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN



C'MON, JESSIE, DON'T BE CHICKENSHIT.

THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE THE *LAST BODY* YOU SEE IN YOUR LIFE.

SHE'S ONLY A LITTLE YOUNGER THAN *US.*

NOT AS *TOUGH,* THOUGH.

DON'T, CECE. THAT'S NOT FUCKING FUNNY.

WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO *SAVE HER.*

HEY. WE'LL STOP THE NEXT ONE, OKAY?

OKAY?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

HM?

I TALKED TO THE GIRL. IF SHE STAYS CLOSE, I BET I CAN TALK TO HER AGAIN.

YEAH. THAT'S GOOD. I CAN MAKE SURE SHE STAYS CLOSE.

WE NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S OUT THERE.

YEAH.

YOU CAME HERE ***BEFORE,*** RIGHT? IS IT...DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THAT WAS A ***LONG TIME AGO,*** ERICA. DON'T GET CAUGHT ON IT. THIS IS THE SAME AS ANY OTHER CASE. WE'LL ***WORK IT*** THE SAME AS ANY OTHER CASE.

WE NEED TO KNOW MORE. WHEN WE DO, WE'LL HUNT.

KEEP EYES ON ***OUR GIRL.*** IF THERE'S A MOMENT, YOU CAN TALK TO HER AGAIN. GET A FULL ACCOUNT.

TALK TO THE ***OTHER KIDS.*** SEE WHAT THEY KNOW.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

DON'T BE SO FUCKING ***WORRIED ABOUT ME*** ALL THE TIME, ERICA. I WAS DOING THIS A LONG TIME WITHOUT YOU.

I COULD DO THIS ***MYSELF*** IF I WASN'T TRYING TO TEACH ***YOU*** SOMETHING.

OKAY.

TALK TO THE KIDS. I'LL HANDLE THE REST.

I'M GOING ***FBI,*** OKAY?

YEAH.

OKAY.

SURE, I'LL HOLD. I'VE ***BEEN*** HOLDING, BUT I CAN HOLD.

CAN I HELP YOU?

YOU DONE ONE OF THESE BEFORE?

"ONE OF THESE"?

DEAD KIDS IN THE WOODS.

MA'AM, I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A ***FEW HUNDRED*** FUCKING THINGS RIGHT NOW AND I DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR CHIT-CHAT.

"MA'AM"! REALLY?

RIGHT NOW WE CAN'T FIND ANY ***LIVING CONTACT*** FOR THIS GIRL, AND THE STATE'S FIGHTING ME EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

I THINK I CAN HELP.

WHY CAN YOU HELP?

I'M ON VACATION, BUT I'M ***SPECIAL AGENT KINGFISHER.*** IT LOOKS LIKE YOU COULD USE A HAND.

WANT ME TO TACKLE ***CHILD SERVICES,*** WHILE YOU WORK THE BODIES?

DEPARTMENT of INVESTIGATION

FBI

SPECIAL AGENT

OKAY, SURE. SEE IF YOU CAN GET ANYBODY ON THE LINE.

I THINK MAYBE IT'D BE WORTH GETTING THE KID A ROOM FOR THE NIGHT. IT MIGHT TAKE A WHILE TO GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN. IT'LL BE EASIER IN THE MORNING.

THE ***BUREAU*** CAN PICK UP THE TAB.

YEAH?

YEAH.

WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SPECIAL AGENT KINGFISHER.

YOU CAN CALL ME *JESSICA.*

WHO IS THIS?

WE'VE GOT *FBI BACKUP,* WHEELER.

THEY SENT YOU?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I JUST WANTED A LITTLE *MOUNTAIN AIR.*

I'M GOING TO QUIT.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO QUIT.

I DON'T WANT TO GET *EATEN* BY A *BEAR,* BARNEY! THIS IS INSANE!

BEAR'S NOT GETTING INTO THE GIFT SHOP.

WE HAVE TO, LIKE, *GO OUTSIDE* AND SHIT.

I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES IN THE PARKING LOT.

MY MOM IS GOING TO FREAK OUT!

HEY.

YOU GOT COFFEE OR SOMETHING?

KIND OF *LATE* FOR COFFEE.

I DON'T REALLY CARE.

I THINK WHAT MY DEAR FRIEND BARNEY IS TRYING TO SAY IS THAT THE COFFEE IS *ALREADY BAD* WHEN IT'S FRESH.

AND IT'S *NOT* FRESH.

I'LL LIVE.

MAYBE.

HOW IS THIS PLACE STILL OPEN?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HOW MANY BODIES IS THIS? IN THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS.

TONIGHT'S MASSACRE BRINGS US TO ***NINE.***

WAS THERE EVER A SURVIVOR BEFORE? ANOTHER KID?

NOPE.

YEAH. THE OTHER KIDS DIDN'T MAKE IT.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IT GOT ***ADULTS.***

IT'S GETTING ***STRONGER,*** THEN.

DON'T FUCKING SAY THAT.

THIS REALLY IS AWFUL COFFEE.

WE TRIED TO WARN YOU.

HEY, DOLL.
YOU GOT A NAME?
YEAH, I HAVE A NAME.
YOU SHARING IT, OR YOU BEING STINGY ABOUT IT WITH GROWN-UPS?
WHAT'S "STINGY"?
LIKE GREEDY. YOU HAVE IT AND YOU DON'T WANT TO GIVE IT AWAY.
YEAH. I'M *STINGY.*
WHAT IF I PROMISE NOT TO TELL ANYBODY?
YOU WERE WITH ERICA.
YEAH.
I'M *BEX.*
YOU CAN TELL ERICA, TOO.
THANK YOU.
WHAT DID YOU TELL THE COPS YOU SAW?
I TOLD THEM IT WAS DARK. THAT I COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING.
ERICA TELL YOU TO SAY THAT?
YEAH.

HOW MANY WERE THERE?

WHAT?

PROBABLY FOUR OR FIVE BEFORE TODAY. NOW THERE WILL BE A PACK OF NEARLY TEN. AND THEY'RE FAST.

THEY HAVE *TOO MANY EYES.*

YEAH. WAY TOO MANY FUCKING EYES.

ARE WE SAFE HERE?

NO. NONE OF US ARE SAFE HERE.

BUT WE'RE GOING TO DO OUR BEST, OKAY?

# SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN™

## "ALL HER MONSTERS"
PART THREE

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